DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 095 851 IR 001 028

AUTHOR	Mojkowski, Charles
TITLE	Elements of a Model State Education Agency Diffusion System.
INSTITUTION	Rhode Island State Dept. of Education, Providence.
PUB DATE	14 Feb 74
NOTE	24p.; Paper presented at the National Dissemination Conference (Washington, D.C., February 1974)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Conference Reports; Delivery Systems; *Diffusion; Education; *Educational Innovation; *Information Dissemination; Models; *State Agencies; Supplementary Educational Centers
IDENTIFIERS	National Dissemination Conference

ABSTRACT

A study, presented to the National Dissemination Conference, provides a conceptualization of a model diffusion system as it might exist within a state education agency (SEA) and places this diffusion model within the context of the SEA's expanding role as an educational service. Five conclusions were reached regarding a model diffusion system. First, diffusion, not dissemination, should be the concern of SEAs. Second, diffusion systems and the diffusion process itself provide means to a larger SEA objective--the health school system. Third, an SEA diffusion system is comprised of information, linkage, staff development, strategy design. Fourth, while several state education agencies are involved in assisting local schools using diffusion system resources, very few, if any, SEAs have been able to coordinate resources in a coherent delivery system. Finally, there is a significant role that SEAs can play in research and development activities related to diffusion resources and the diffusion process. (WCM)

ED 095851

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ELEMENTS OF A MODEL STATE EDUCATION AGENCY DIFFUSION SYSTEM

by

Charles Mojkowski

Rhode Island Department of Education

Presented at the National Dissemination Conference, Washington, D.C.
February 14, 1974

IR 001 028

ELEMENTS OF A MODEL STATE EDUCATION AGENCY DIFFUSION SYSTEM[1]

Introduction

The purpose of my presentation is to provide a conceptualization of a model diffusion system as it might exist within a state education agency (SEA). A parallel and equally important purpose is to place this model within the context of the state education agency's expanding role as an educational service and leadership organization directed toward "building capacities" in local school districts, or as Egon Guba has depicted it, helping to create "healthy school systems."[2]

At the outset I will offer some operational definitions of such nebulous concepts as diffusion, dissemination, and healthy school systems. These definitions will serve as guides for my presentation and perhaps for our discussions later on. Along the way, in explicating the model and its context, I will be citing the efforts of several state education agencies in designing and implementing elements of a diffusion system.

My objectives are:

1) To outline briefly the growth of the diffusion function in state education agencies.
2) To describe the role of the state education agency in the program development process being implemented in local school districts.

[1]While I accept responsibility for the contents of this paper, I gratefully acknowledge the reviews and comments provided by Nelson Ashline, Janice Baker, Edward Dambruch, Kenneth Mellor and Alan Sinclair.

[2]Comment made to the author in a meeting on April 6, 1973, in Washington, D.C.

3) To delineate a model diffusion system that a state education agency might establish to serve this program development process.
4) To provide some illustrations of the variety of interfaces that might exist between the program development process and the diffusion system.

For the purposes of my presentation I propose to define diffusion as a "system for achieving implementation and maintenance of validated programs and practices in schools." This definition is an adaptation of the theoretical work of Clark (1967), Guba (1968) and Rogers (1962) among others. Those familiar with the defintion given the concept dissemination in a paper prepared by the staff of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 1972) will notice a close similarity between our definitions. I define dissemination, however, as that part of the diffusion process dealing with the communication of information. As the remainder of my presentation will make clear, state education agencies must be concerned with more than "spreading the word" about innovations. There is simply too much history associated with the term dissemination to hope that we will ever be able to give it a new expanded meaning and make it work for us in a new role for state education agencies.

The Diffusion Function in State Education Agencies

Much of the history of the development of the diffusion function in SEAS has been heard before. The National Center for Educational Communication, the National Dissemination Conferences, the position papers developed under the auspices of the CCSSO and the recent report of the National Institute of Education have delineated its development (or lack of it) in state education agencies.

In general, there has been an absence of coordinated diffusion systems in state education agencies. This results not so much from a lack of need or resources as from an inability to coordinate the diverse Federal and State programs within

some coherent framework. To some extent, Federal guidelines have militated against a coordination of resources across Federal and State programs for such activities as needs assessment, evaluation, dissemination and diffusion. Other factors which serve to inhibit the development of a more coherent diffusion system are:

1) The lack of practical, implementable models which translate the large body of research into practice.
2) Rather narrow conceptualizations of diffusion as information communication rather than as a comprehensive process for bringing about the implementation and maintenance of validated programs and practices in schools.
3) Misconceptions of the diffusion function to include public information, public relations or management information.

This is not to say that there has been no development of the diffusion function in SEAs. Beginning with the establishment of ERIC and of PREP reports, and continuing into such activities as the national and regional dissemination conferences, an awareness of the diffusion function has grown in many states into an implementation of organizational units whose responsibility it is to deal with the coordination of diffusion activities. The pilot programs using the extension agent model and the continuation of a small number of information centers have advanced the state of the art and helped in formulating future directions for the development of diffusion theory and practice. I think it would be safe to say that these later developments in SEAs have served to underscore the inadequacy of a heavy emphasis on dissemination as opposed to diffusion.

The problem which I raised previously with respect to terminology is indictive of the evolution that has taken place in SEAs' conception of diffusion. When NCEC began to promote the development of a <u>dissemination</u> function, the state

of the art in most SEAs was such that we were doing well if we could just get a coordinated communication program operational. The first two National Dissemination Conferences were largely educational and directed toward this objective. There is no question that the conferences have become increasingly more sophisticated and more complex problems have been discussed.

I believe the development of the NIE paper, "Building Capacity for Renewal and Reform", will focus our attention on still more complex issues, at least one of which I will attempt to deal with today. In Rhode Island as in other states, we have begun to recognize the need to place the development of the diffusion system more securely within the context of the program development process in schools and to clearly define the role of the SEA in that process. In simpler terms, the elements of a diffusion system must exist to serve program development and educational improvement. In this focus on ends rather than means, the concept of a "healthy school system" becomes a major criterion for assessing the effectiveness of the diffusion system.

To date, no state education agency has been able to implement a diffusion system as an agency-wide function, although some states have made considerable progress in this direction, particulary in terms of information dissemination. In Rhode Island, for example, one Bureau has been designated as the diffusion mechanism for all program development activities in and with local school districts (Mellor and Mojkowski, 1973). While the system is not fully operational, there is some framework available to which additional elements of a diffusion system can be attached.

The problem of assigning the diffusion function a highly visible status in an SEA is related to the issue of coordination. It would appear to me that the visibility, or perhaps I should say the success, of the diffusion system is more a function of its ability to deliver a coherent and comprehensive system for

coordinating the various diffusion activities within a state education agency than it is one of placement in an SEA table of organization.

The Role of the SEA in Developing Healthy School Systems

Let me return to this concept of the healthy school system and the role of the SEA in its development. A major problem facing state education agencies today is the need to develop the capacity for educational change and the resources necessary to provide leadership and service to local education agencies in planning and implementing educational improvements. Traditionally, state education agencies have been responsible for regulatory functions, such as teacher certification, school approvals, student attendance requirements, and minimum curriculum and textbook guidelines. In addition, many SEAs have operational functions such as the administration of vocational and special education schools.

Since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, however, increasing numbers of SEAs have attempted to develop a capacity for substantive educational leadership. Among the leadership functions undertaken have been: (1) the development of planning and needs assessment procedures; (2) the identification and diffusion of successful programs; (3) the provision of information and research utilization services; (4) the provision of professional support services for innovation; and (5) the redesign of inservice education delivery systems. In many instances, however, the SEA's capacity remains only partly developed and often not integrated into a coherent design. Capacity to perform leadership and change functions has generally evolved in bits and pieces, frequently in response to provisions of many different Federal laws providing categorical aid to education.

Given this new thrust of state education agencies a major consideration is, what can SEAs be accountable for in implementing this new service and leadership role? That is, what outcomes can an SEA strive for and use to plot its success or failure in achieving this service and leadership role with respect to local school

districts? To answer this question we must define what we mean by " a healthy school system". I would like to offer an operational definition of such a system and discuss the role of the SEA and its diffusion system in bringing this state into being.

School systems are "healthy" to the degree that they have the capacity:

1) To comprehensively assess their educational needs in terms of students, their learning environment and the support system which provides the resources to facilitate meeting those priority needs.
2) To use modern planning and problem-solving techniques in designing broad strategies to address those identified needs.
3) To develop curricula or programs based on the best research and program information available.
4) To undertake adequate development of staff in order that they can develop and implement needed curricula, programs and practices.
5) To procure sufficient resources to implement and maintain new or improved programs and practices.
6) To monitor and evaluate the progress of programs in meeting those priority educational needs of the students and of the community at large.

These six capacities constitute the process of program development and to some extent all SEAs are involved in this capacity building system. While a state education agency may not be held directly accountable for the educational progress of children in any specific school district, it may be held accountable for the degree to which local school districts can implement the program development process which has a direct impact on the quality of education in schools.

If healthy school systems constitute a major objective for state education agencies, then SEAs must develop and maintain resources to assist school systems in this process. As we shall see, and as most of you are aware, many SEA organi-

zational structures reflect this evolutionary growth in this service and leadership role. What is needed is to illustrate how the elements of a diffusion system can interface with and be made to serve the program development process.

Elements of a Model Diffusion System

In contrast to the program development process described above, the diffusion system is more difficult to define. The program development model is essentially linear, affording of course, for a number of feedback loops. At the very least, it is a step-by-step process which has a certain logical arrangement. Elements of an SEA diffusion system exist not as a sequential arrangement but rather as a set of interacting resources which interface with those capacities in the program development process.

This is not to say that the diffusion process itself (to the degree that one process exists) is not linear. Clark's (1967) four step process of information, demonstration, training, and services and nurturing are essentially linear and sequential. All of the resource elements of an SEA diffusion system, however, usually relate to each and every step of the process.

Let me begin, then, by describing the major elements of the diffusion system, placing them in some framework and then delineating some relationships and interactions between: (1) the healthy school system and the diffusion system and, (2) between the diffusion system and other SEA resources which support capacity building activities.

The major elements of the SEA diffusion system are: (1) an information storage and retrieval system, (2) an intermediary or linkage system, (3) a staff development system, and (4) a diffusion strategy design system. Let me describe the composition of each of these elements.

A major resource in a diffusion system is an information storage and retrieval capability. Such a system should have computer and manual access to ERIC

and related information files as well as to in-house collections of "fugitive" documents. It must be able to retrieve full text of documents and journal articles and provide descriptions of on-going projects and programs as well as information on human resources.

The elements of such a system have been well delineated by Coulson (1972) and Brickley, Trohoski and Katucki (1972) and thus I will make only two additional comments about this component. First, it does not constitute a diffusion system. At most, it is a dispenser of information to practitioners engaged in program development. Typically, it is one of many resources to the intermediary or linkage system which coordinates all available SEA resources for the program development process. Second, the information storage and retrieval component is basically a responsive system. Broadcast dissemination of information is of secondary importance to the provision of specially prepared responses to requests for information.[1]

The core element of the SEA diffusion system is the intermediary or linkage system. This component serves as the intersection between the program development process in local school districts and SEA resources as well as the other components in the diffusion system. Linkage systems can be of many types. The educational extension agent concept implemented by the pilot dissemination projects is a prominent example of a linkage system. The placement of these agents within local school districts or within SEAs in one variation of their use. The scope of their role is another modification that can be made.

Other types of intermediary systems include teacher centers, of which the number of variations is considerable; demonstration projects, which serve as models for purposes of exportation and installation; and more temporary systems such as workshops and conferences which serve ad hoc linkage functions.

[1]At least two information centers I know of, RISE in Pennsylvania and ACES in Connecticut, do coordinate Title III dissemination activities for their states in addition to having a strong responsive capability.

The third component of the diffusion system is the staff development resource. While essentially the same concept as Clark's training function, I have chosen the broader term so as to match that step in the program development process and to emphasize the broader role that staff development can play in the entire diffusion process. Whatever terminology is used to describe the process from awareness to implementation, some form of staff development is essential. In the early stages, this might be the simple provision of information about validated programs and practices. During trial stages, actual demonstrations serve to develop additional competencies in the staff. Finally, with an in-depth training program, the staff can be prepared for implementation and maintenance.

The fourth element of the SEA dissemination system is the diffusion strategy design system. This component deals with the development of strategies for the implementation of validated programs or practices in schools. The need for some diffusion strategy design capability is critical to the development of an SEA diffusion system. The fact that no complete theory of diffusion exists (Bernhardt and MacKenzie, 1970) should not deter state agencies from working through the problems of designing and implementing strategies based upon the best available knowledge and improving on the knowledge base regarding knowledge utilization and diffusion.

There certainly is no lack of material available on both a conceptual and practical level which SEAs can use to begin their own work. The problem has been the lack of a coherent system with which to implement and test out existing theories and models. Hull and his colleagues (1973) at the Center for Vocational and Tehcnical Education have attempted to carry forward the work of Rogers and Havelock by drafting a conceptual framework for the diffusion of innovations. The framework is a primitive yet valuable tool for researchers and practitioners for the design and analysis of diffusion strategies. With such a framework the SEA

can begin to analyze its effectiveness in serving its clients by focusing on the numerous relationships that exist between the advocate, the client and the innovation.

You will note that my description of the diffusion system is focused on that of an SEA. Obviously, Havelock's (1973) definition of linkage focuses on the broader interface between the practitioner and the researcher, between the consumer of knowledge or information and the producer. In this sense the SEA comprises just one of many intermediary systems along with such components as publishers and professional associations. The focus on the SEA role serves to detail at a more specific level the role of diffusion in the SEA/local school district relationship.

Before dealing with specific illustrations of how some states have brought together some elements of both the program development process and the diffusion system, it might be helpful to look at a graphic representation of the conjuction of the two systems. Let us start with the program development process in the local education agency (see Figure 1). Each of the major elements of the process exist within the total operating system. Next we have the SEA with its program development resources and with its diffusion resources. Last, we overlay the variety of intermediary systems which serve as the bond for the two systems (see Figure 2).

Illustrations

I would like to illustrate the workings of the diffusion system by describing how various states have set up interfaces between elements of both systems. Let me say at the outset that my citations are by no means exhaustive of the variety of activities being undertaken by state education agencies with respect to capacity building activities and related diffusion system activities. I hope that the discussion following my presentation will allow for a sharing of information about other efforts as well as for a further discussion of those cited here. My intention in selecting examples is to illustrate how elements of the diffusion

FIGURE 1

SEA RESOURCES AND THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

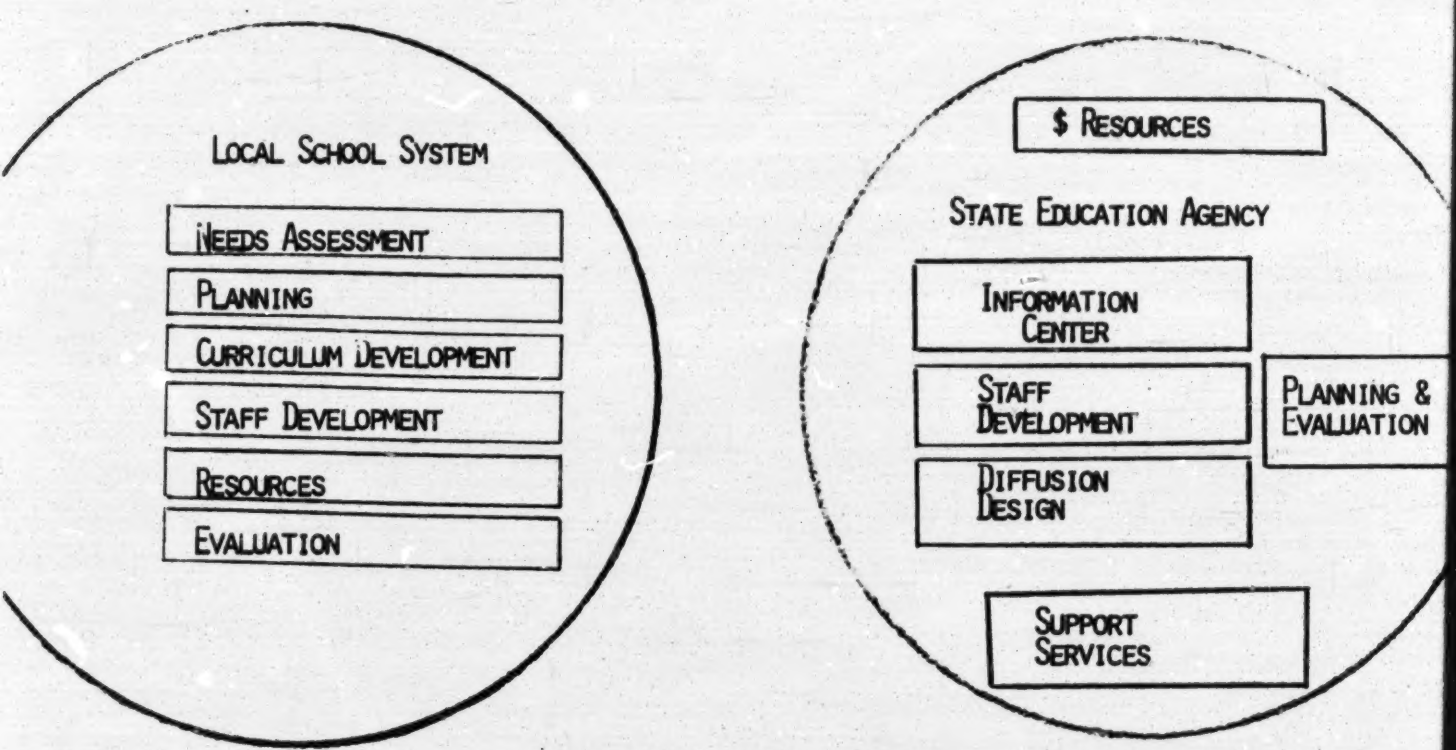
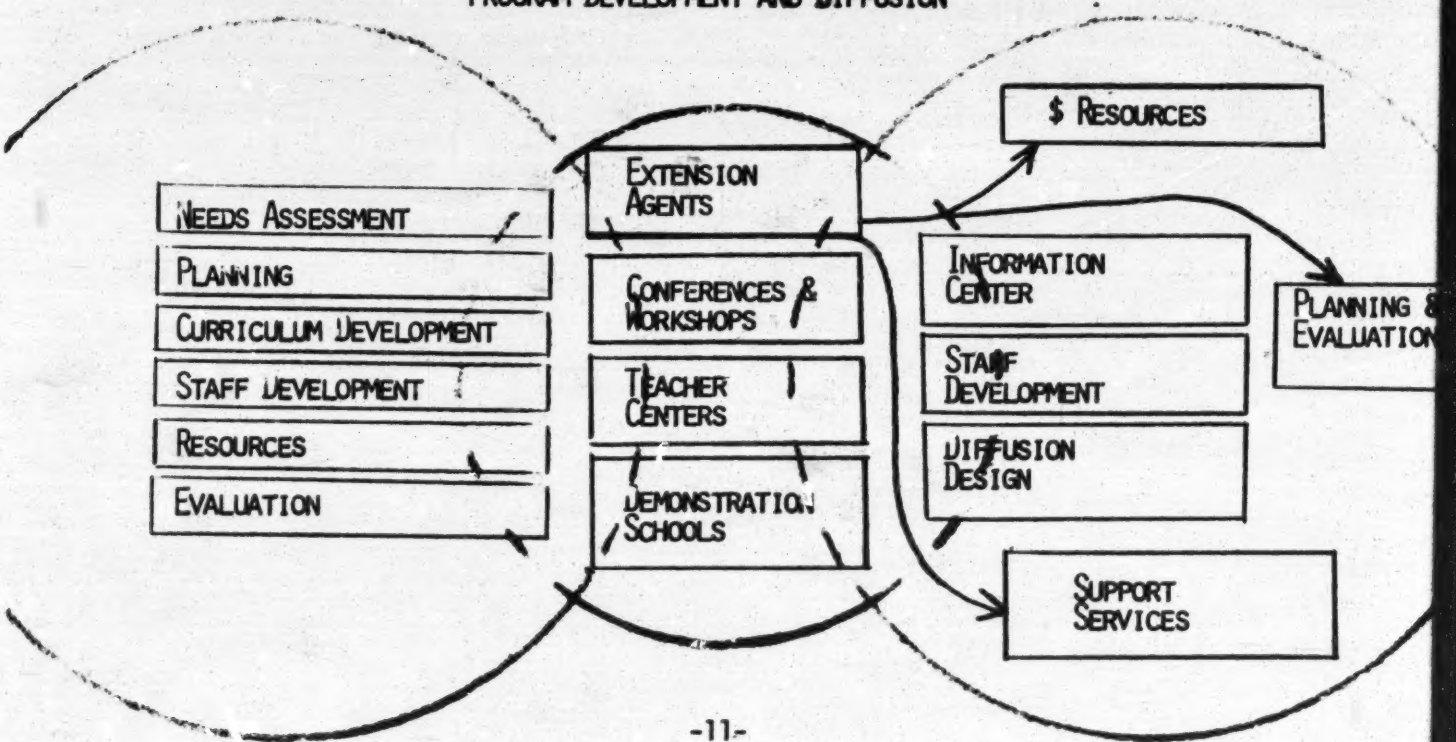


FIGURE 2

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFUSION



system serve the program development process. At least logically it is easier to describe these relationships by examining each step in the program development process.

Project RISE (Research and Information Services for Education), an information center in Pennsylvania, has been providing support to the needs assessment process at both the state and local level. Educational Quality Assessment (EQA) in Pennsylvania had its origin in legislation of the General Assembly in 1963 and in 1965 the State Board of Education adopted the Ten Goals of Quality Education. Project RISE has provided support to the needs assessment process through information services in three specific areas related to the statewide assessment:

1) Assistance in identifying existing assessment instruments for measuring the goals and related condition variables.
2) Provision of selective dissemination of information (SDI) update services to EQA staff and SEA policy makers regarding the burgeoning assessment activities in other states brought on by the 1967 ESEA Amendments and the accountability movement.
3) Assistance to EQA staff in developing dissemination strategies to insure awareness of EQA by all levels of the education community and the public at large.

Thus, the two-way information flow and linkage capabilities of RISE and its state-wide dissemination network have been highly integrated into an effective needs assessment/information utilization system.

In the New York State Department of Education the linkage between needs assessment and its information system is a part of an overall plan for the coordination of the diffusion function. At present, the focus is on coordinating SEA level needs assessment and planning activities. In Rhode Island, on the other hand, the focus in the Bureau of Technical Assistance is to link the information center and support

services in the conduct of needs assessment directly to local school system personnel.

In terms of planning at the local level, the South Carolina Department of Education provides an excellent illustration of the integration of information and staff development services with the planning process in local school districts. An Office of Planning and Dissemination coordinates the development and operation of the Department's Five Year Plan which is designed to meet statewide educational needs. Most of the school districts in South Carolina have identified educational goals, and some have developed plans to meet objectives based on locally identified educational needs. The planning office also provides technical assistance to local administrators through a training program designed to develop skills in a wide range of planning and assessment activities.

Consistent with the current operation of the Office of Planning and Dissemination, the mission of the Planning Resources Section is to participate in the educational planning process at the state and local levels by assisting educators to utilize information at key decision points within the planning process. The resources of the unit are directed toward providing alternatives to decision-makers. A new product has been developed which identifies alternatives (in programs, policies, or procedures, according to the nature of the request) and provides resource documents for in-depth study by the decision-maker. Educators are encouraged to request the services of the unit when they are involved in statewide, district-wide, or school-wide efforts to meet identified educational needs.

In a very specific way, South Carolina has addressed those problems mentioned earlier of defining its role, of establishing a context for information services and of focusing on ends that involve local school district capacities. I am aware that some states require that local school districts prepare short and long

range plans based on a comprehensive needs assessment. South Carolina's program illustrates the potential of a linkage between this planning process and information services. Also of critical importance is the technical assistance in planning procedures which can be delivered to local school personnel along with the information.

In the area of curriculum development, the role of an information service is relatively obvious. Through computer searches of ERIC and related educational files, an information center can bring before developers a range of programs or practices which are potential solutions to the practitioner's specific needs. Project Communicate, an information center in the Kansas Department of Education, has developed extensive information resources to support curriculum development. The critical element at this point in the process, however, is not the information itself but its utilization. It is to this problem that an intermediary or linkage system is directed.

The SEA linkage system used extensively in curriculum development services is some form of the educational extension agent. While the variations of the extension agent concept are numerous, all revolve around the information utilization concept. In Pennsylvania this linkage concept has taken the form of Resource Utilization Specialists (RUS) established at the intermediate unit. In South Carolina, four extension agent models were used during the conduct of the pilot project (1970-73) and additional modifications have since been made. In Rhode Island, a major reorganization of the SEA resulted in the development of a small group of program development consultants whose role has involved linkage and direct assistance across the whole range of program development steps. At least three studies relating to the effectiveness of the extension agent role are available (Sieber, 1972), (Herlig, 1973), (Mojkowski and Mellor, 1974). All indicate that the extension agent role is a viable linkage role within an SEA.

In terms of staff development, some SEAs provide resources to local school districts for inservice training. For the most part, however, institutions of

higher education have played the major role in in-service training. In Rhode Island an alternative delivery system for in-service training is being tested under the auspices of a Teacher Center Project funded by the Office of Education's Bureau of Education Professions Development.

The basic components of this new delivery system are:

1) The content of the training is chosen by local school district personnel based on their needs rather than by a college or university.
2) The training is conducted in local school districts with groups of teachers and administrators concerned with program development issues within that district rather than in a college classroom where the concerns of the students are more diffuse.
3) The objective of the training is to have some impact on the programs and practices being implemented in that school district rather than to complete graduate requirements.
4) Graduate credit is provided as an incentive.
5) All training is conducted on validated programs and practices identified through a screening of potential programs collected from throughout the United States.

Under such a system, more than twenty percent of Rhode Island's teachers and administrators in over seventy percent of its school districts have taken part in training provided by the training resource (called the Alternate Learning Center) in the Department of Education (January, 1973 to present).

While the delivery system itself is innovative, it is its role in the diffusion process that is of critical importance. Let me list some significant elements of such a training system:

1) Training resources are more efficiently used since they are allocated and used on a need basis.

2) The system enhances the possibility of significant educational reform by emphasizing teaching personnel as decision-makers in the training process (see Bailey, 1971).

3) The system provides for more efficient and articulate feedback into the R&D community regarding needed resources and needed improvements in existing resources.

4) The system provides an opportunity for the SEA to study planning for staff development in local school districts.

A second resource related to the staff development function is Texas' use of demonstration schools as a vehicle for bringing practitioners through trial stages of the adoption/implementation process. Local school personnel require more than just information to make decisions about program alternatives. They need to examine the alternatives in a real world environment.

Texas has long used printed and audiovisual materials to develop awareness and interest but little had been done to provide for the mental trial stage until two years ago when a network of demonstration schools was established. A cooperative endeavor, the network has been guided from its inception in 1971 by a steering committee composed of educators from local schools, regional educational service centers, teacher education institutions, a regional laboratory and the Texas Education Agency.

The steering committee coordinates the selection of potential programs for the network, validates the quality of the programs, and sets up guidelines for the demonstrations themselves. Each visit begins with an orientation to the specific program and includes classroom observations and a de-briefing session during which operational considerations are discussed.

An evaluation of the Texas network conducted in the summer of 1973 found that more than 5,000 educators visited demonstration schools during the 1972-73 school year. A follow-up study of a sample of these teachers and administrators

some four to six months later indicated that seventy-eight (78) percent had initiated some change as a result of a visit to a demonstration school. At this point additional technical assistance is being planned by the Texas Education Agency.

Another linkage and staff development activity for fostering awareness, interest and simulated trial is through awareness conferences. In Rhode Island, the Alternate Learning Center sponsors two conferences each year during which a number of validated state and national programs and practices are demonstrated and discussed. The programs are screened by a committee which uses as criteria priorities identified through statewide needs assessment. Teams of teachers and administrators from each local school district attend the conferences and decide whether any of the products or programs meet their local needs. Training in any product presented at an awareness conference can be provided by the Alternate Learning Center as I described previously.

The role of the SEA in assisting local education agencies in procuring funding resources to support the program development process is really not carried out through the diffusion system except insofar as the linking agent serves to identify resources available to the school district. Usually the funds which SEAs can provide are Federal dollars, and Benson (1972) has pointed out, SEAs have had difficulty in targeting Federal dollars because of restrictive guidelines and regulations. SEAs have become miniature U.S. Offices of Education despite the fact that they exist for very different purposes. A great deal of wasted resources result from this inability to pool resources for targeted funding directed at identified priority needs.

Assistance in the evaluation of the program development process in LEAs is an additional resource available from SEAs. For the most part the extension agent serves in a linking role, providing information about evaluation methods, techniques and instruments and linkage to other SEA experts. Since the advocate role is not

strongly developed in the extension system, the agent usually avoids directly providing evaluation services so as to maintain some degree of neutrality.

There are four general comments about this description of interfaces which I would like to make before summarizing. First, the description I have provided is relatively simplistic in light of the extensive and detailed theories dealing with diffusion. Nevertheless, most of us here are essentially practitioners in what the NIE report calls "the operating system" and our models and our theories will need to be developed from a clear concept of what it is SEAs are about as well as what more sophisticated theorists tell us. As partners in this effort to build capacity, it is our responsibility to maintain a clear perspective of our roles as SEAs and to represent this perspective in utilizing research on the diffusion process.

Just as I am aware that my analysis lacks the complexity of those attempting to integrate every variable, so am I also aware that efforts to reduce diffusion to some sophisticated form of communication is to simplify it to the point where it can no longer assist state education agencies in designing strategies for educational change.

A second generalization relates to the development of intermediary or linkage systems within SEAs. My illustrations should indicate the critical role such systems play in the development of an SEA diffusion system and also in the program development process in local schools. Without some form of linkage, SEAs will find the service and leadership role difficult to establish and maintain, particularly where the SEA must establish and prove itself.

A third comment relates to the issue of funding the establishment and maintenance of a dissemination system. A quantity of information and experience is available to guide the development of information centers and to a lesser extent, linkage systems. Most diffusion systems are not supported by state funds. Many use a combination of Federal dollars, state dollars and information service charges. Very few diffusion systems or information components are funded through a normal operating budget provided by the SEA.

The New York State Department of Education has established an information unit using resources (dollars, people and materials) from Vocational Education, ESEA III, from the State's Research Division and the State Library. A plan to expand the present base of resource contribution is currently being developed and will hopefully draw from a wider variety of existing programs. In essence the plan under development draws a percentage of the administrative budget from SEA units being provided services on a routine basis and assesses Federal and State programs a percentage contribution to be pooled for information support services. New York's efforts may provide other states with a model for identifying resources for the development of a diffusion system or for the institutionalization of the system after Federal project funds are withdrawn.

A fourth and final generalization relates to the diffusion system as a series of closely related resource components. While an SEA may establish an information system or some form of linkage system, the impact of these services will be diminished by their separation from the remaining components. Our experience with ESEA Title III and dissemination should indicate that communication of information is not enough to achieve our objectives.[1]

Summary and Conclusions

The following points may serve as a summary of my presentation:

1) It is diffusion, not dissemination, that should be the concern of SEAs. And, if we think it is possible to mean the same thing with either term we are ignoring both our experience and the research evidence.

2) Diffusion systems and the diffusion process itself are means to a larger SEA objective - the healthy school system.

[1]For a more detailed analysis of this issue, see Boyan and Mason, "Perspectives on Educational R&D Centers," Journal of Research and Development in Education, (Summer, 1969) pp. 198-199.

3) An SEA diffusion system is comprised of (1) an information system, (2) a linkage or intermediary system, (3) a staff development system, and (4) a diffusion strategy design system. All are critical to the establishment of an effective diffusion system.

4) While several state education agencies are involved in assisting local schools using diffusion system resources, very few, if any, SEAs have been able to coordinate resources in a coherent delivery system.

5) There is a significant role that SEAs can play in research and development activities related to diffusion resources and the diffusion process.

I would like to conclude by saying that the future of the development of SEA diffusion systems appears to be promising. Consolidation of the conglomerate of Federal categorical grant programs may result in an increased coordination of funds with increased flexibility for SEAs in directing monies to their own priorities as well as those of locals. Functions such as needs assessment, evaluation and diffusion may achieve agency-wide coordination rather than be fragmented among categories of aid.

Plans for state financing of public education are either in progress or in the early stages of implementation in several states. Various systems changes such as PPBS, MIS and accountability will bring the SEA into a more crucial role with respect to education. The diffusion system will play a greater part in the SEA's new relationships with local school districts. The problem will be to get SEAs to recognize that, with respect to such systems changes, they are dealing with a diffusion process with the SEA in the advocate role.

Finally, if advocates of the SEA diffusion system are to succeed, they will have to demonstrate how the operating components of the diffusion system can be useful to the SEA in activities in addition to the program development process. My brief experience with information systems is that they are very powerful tools

for assisting SEA personnel in the conduct of research, policy planning and various operational activities.

Finally allow me to view the most recent developments within the National Institute of Education as positive evidence that a federal-state partnership in the development of diffusion systems and theory has a strong potential for becoming a reality. State education agencies must begin to prepare for this reality.

REFERENCES

Bailey, Stephen K. "Teacher Centers: A British First," Phi Delta Kappan. (November, 1971), pp. 146-149.

Benson, Gregory M. Jr. "Dissemination as a Process Component with Implications for Organizing a State Agency Dissemination Unit," New York Department of Education, 1972.

Bernhardt, Irwin and MacKenzie, Kenneth S. "Some Problems in Using Diffusion Models for New Products." Pennsylvania State University, 1970. (ED 046078)

Brickley, Richard, Trohoski, Carolyn and Katucki, June. "Notes on Establishing and ERIC Educational Information Center," National Institute of Education, 1972.

Clark, David L. "Educational Research and Development: The Last Decade," Implications for Education of Prospective Changes in Society, ed. Morphet, Edgar, Denver: Eight State Project, 1967

Council of Chief State School Officers. "Issues for Chief State School Officers in State and Federal Efforts to Spread Improved Educational Practices by Means of Dissemination Systems." Washington: CCSSO, November, 1972.

Coulson, John. "Toward Establishing an Information Dissemination Unit." Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Communication, June, 1972.

Guba, Egon G. "Development, Diffusion and Evaluation," in Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration. eds. Eidell, Terry L. and Kitchel, Joanne M., Eugene, Oregon, The Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration 1967.

Havelock, Ronald G. A Guide to Innovation in Education. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Research in Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, 1970.

Herlig, Richard K. The Role of the Educational Extension Agent in Information Utilization. Kansas State Department of Education, August, 1973.

Hull William J., Kester, Ralph J. and Martin, William B. A Conceptual Framework for the Diffusion of Innovations in Vocational and Technical Education. Columbus: The Center for Vocational and Technical Education, March 1973.

Mellor, Kenneth and Mojkowski, Charles. "Organizing for Educational Improvement," Rhode Island Department of Education, February, 1973. (ED 082359)

Mojkowski, Charles and Mellor, Kenneth. "Role Definition and Effectiveness of Part-time Information Consultants in Rhode Island." Rhode Island Department of Education, February, 1974.

Rogers, Everett M. Diffusion of Innovations. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

Sieber, Sam D. Field Agent Roles in Education. New York: Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1972.